



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY

February 3 is Four Chaplains Day in the USA. This day commemorates the events of February 3, 1943, when the troop ship USAT Dorchester sank.

Dorchester left New York on January 23, 1943, carrying four chaplains and about 900 others as a part of convoy of three ships. It was torpedoed by German submarine U-223 off Newfoundland at 12:55 a.m. When Dorchester began to sink, four chaplains of different religions, George L. Fox (Methodist), Alexander D. Goode (rabbi), Clark V. Poling (Baptist) and John P. Washington (Catholic) were helping to calm down the passengers and organized an orderly evacuation.

The life vests were passed out to men, but the supply ran out before each man had one. The four chaplains gave their own life vests to others and helped as many men as they could into the boats, then they linked their arms together, saying prayers and singing hymns, went down with the ship.

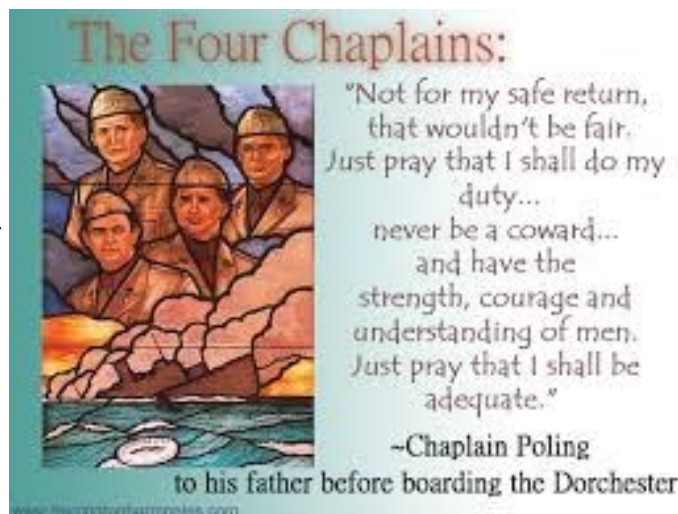
Four chaplains were posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross on December 19, 1944. In 2006 chaplains were awarded the Medal of Honor.

The Four Chaplains' Medal was introduced by Congress on July 14, 1960. These medals were presented posthumously to the next of kin of each of the four chaplains of Dorchester on January 18, 1961.

Congress established February 3 as Four Chaplains Day in 1988.

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## USD CONTINUES THEIR SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

The University of South Dakota (USD) will hold two special events to honor veterans. These events are open to the public and are sponsored by the USD Department of Education, Professor Jing Williams.

The first event is, the "I Spy Patriotism" Photography Exhibition which will be held on Thursday, February 23, 2017, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm (CT). The exhibit will feature 48 future elementary school teacher's photo collages that honor veterans. The display will be at the USD Muenster Center [MUC] Ballroom C.

In addition, "Clay County's Fallen" Research Contest will be held on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, from 5:00 –8:00 pm (CT) at the USD School of Education, Room 118. Twenty future middle/high school teachers will present their research findings on fallen heroes in Clay County.



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH DAKOTA

## STATE VETERANS HOME SECURES VA CERTIFICATION

A VA Recognition Survey was conducted at the year old Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota Veterans Home in Hot Springs over the past three days concluding February 2. This VA Recognition inspection is a collaboration of clinical, physical plant and administrative departments focused on adhering to a stringent set of federal regulations and policies focused purely on caring for America's Hero's. This VA inspection is critical and is a "must pass" in order to open any new veterans home in the country, in order to receive Veterans Administration financial support.

In opening last January, with 52 nursing beds, the State Veterans Home had worked and prepared for the initial VA Recognition Survey which concluded last March. The Veterans Home earned a ZERO deficiency last year.

Shortly thereafter, legislation was adopted adding an additional 24 nursing beds which in the eyes of the Veterans Administration was considered a new building. The VA returned again this week to inspect the "new" building and again, South Dakota can be proud to learn our Veterans Home earned yet another "ZERO Deficiency" rating.

"I believe the results of this survey accurately portray the teamwork and dedication from all the employees at the State Veteran's Home," said Nurse Jennifer Skala. "I feel very lucky to have the honor of working with so many professional individuals."

"This was my first VA survey and I feel things went very smoothly," said Marsha Redday a Certified nurse aide. "This is a great work environment and it is a pleasure to be working with so many professional people. Proud of the rating we received."

"What an amazing result! 'zero deficiencies,' found by the VA survey team," said Gayle Tescher. "It speaks to the dedication and care of the great employees and leadership at the Home. As a team, we strive to give our veterans the best care possible. The bar is set high, and we will maintain that excellence."

## VFW HONORS YOUTH AND TEACHERS

The Veterans of Foreign Wars has a long history of recognizing our youth and our teachers for their patriotism. This week during their legislative rally, the State VFW hosted teachers and students and families at their annual luncheon at the AmericInn.

With 2,162 entries in the Patriots Pen contest, the VFW had quite the challenge to select the top three. Those top three were recognized and presented gifts and a plaque. There were 805 students in the state that entered the Voice of Democracy contest, and the top seven were present and recognized.

Two teachers from Pierre were presented the 2017 Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award for South Dakota. Emily Asher from St. Joseph's School and Jay Mickelson from T.F. Riggs High School. Jody Evjen, the middle school teacher at Waverly South Shore School was the other recipient. Teachers will compete for the national VFW Teacher of the Year award. The VFW Teacher of the Year was established to recognize educators who inspire national pride by teaching citizen education and American traditions and history.

Audry Ricketts, SDDVA public information officer, and Kevin Bowen, SDDVA field service officer, attended the luncheon on behalf of the Department and thanked the VFW for their continued support of our veterans and their families, as well as commended the students and the teachers for the outstanding contributions they have made to honor our heroes.





## SDNG CELEBRATES 155 YEARS OF SERVICE

The South Dakota National Guard marks 155 years of service to the state and nation as they celebrate the Jan. 27, 1862, birth date of the organization's formation. With a proud 155-year heritage of serving as the state's militia, the SDNG finds its origins dating back to 1862 as part of the Dakota Territory.

Since that time, SDNG units have served in nearly every major war or conflict since the Civil War, as well as provided assistance to the state in times of domestic emergencies such as floods, fires, tornadoes and winter storms.

The journey of the Dakota militiaman begins during the Civil War with Companies A and B of the Dakota Cavalry.

On March 2, 1861, President James Buchanan signed the act establishing the Dakota Territory. By that time, Vermillion, Bon Homme and Elk Point were growing communities. The territory tended to be people who were genuine settlers, mostly immigrants from Germany, Norway and Sweden.

Earlier in the 1850s, the U.S. Army had established garrisons at Fort Pierre and Fort Randall on the Missouri River. Their mission was to protect the 5,000 settlers from the threat of attacks.

However, when the Civil War started, the Army withdrew three companies from Fort Randall leaving it in an exposed position. This led to the Dec. 7, 1861, proclamation, by the Territorial Governor William Jayne, to raise two companies of volunteer militia.

Recruiting centers were then established in Yankton, Vermillion and Bon Homme. The citizens were very patriotic with a lot of local pride, and in just over one month enough men had enlisted to assemble the first company of citizen-soldiers. On Jan. 27, 1862, Capt. Nelson Miner, company commander, formed the unit in Yankton, Company A, Dakota Cavalry.

This was the first unit of the Dakota Territory Militia and the birth of the South Dakota National Guard.

Since that historic date in 1862, the SDNG has since seen combat during the Spanish-American War, World War I and II, Operation Just Cause and Operation Desert Storm. The National Guard was also called up during the Mexican Border Conflict, Korean War, Berlin Crisis and peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, each of South Dakota's 22 National Guard communities has experienced a unit mobilization in support of Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom or Operations Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, Inherent Resolve and Spartan Shield.

More than 7,800 soldiers and airmen have deployed in support of these operations. The National Guard is the only military component that holds a dual-mission consisting of both federal and state roles. The federal mission is to maintain trained and equipped units available for prompt mobilization for war or a national emergency. At the state level, the governor reserves the ability, under the Constitution, to call up members of the National Guard in times of domestic emergencies.



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## SDNG (CONTINUED)

Throughout the years, natural disasters have called forth the Guard's spirit of teamwork and sacrifice to battle floods, fires, blizzards and tornado destruction. The Rapid City Flood of 1972, the Spencer Tornado in 1998, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the Missouri River Flood in 2011 and Winter Storm Atlas in 2013 are just a few of the disasters in which the SDNG mobilized its citizen-soldiers and airmen to help their fellow South Dakotans and Americans in times of need.

Today's SDNG remains strong with over 4,100 soldiers and airmen available to execute its dual mission on the state and federal level. The Guard is located in 22 communities throughout South Dakota; comprised of 40 Army Guard units and detachments and 17 Air Guard units. These units perform a variety of missions which include everything from command and control, administration, engineering, field artillery, transportation, logistics, communications, maintenance, aviation, public affairs, military police, firefighting and medical.

The National Guard is no longer a strategic reserve to the active component, but an operational force directly integrated into active-duty deployments and missions. The force structure of the SDNG is designed to meet the needs of the future force; giving the Guard an enhanced capability to respond in times of emergencies and natural disasters and to support overseas contingency operations.

The SDNG had a significant impact on the state's economy with more than \$171.7 million dollars in expenditures and wages in 2016. The SDNG is also one of the largest employers in the state with more than 1,000 full-time federal and state employees, along with over 3,100 traditional Guard members who train on a part-time basis while pursuing a career or civilian education.

These full-time employees, along with state employees and civilian contractors, work to assist the traditional guardsman by providing administrative, training and logistical support. This support collectively goes into helping units meet mobilization and readiness requirements.

The South Dakota Army National Guard remains strong with more than 3,100 soldiers available for state and federal missions. The nerve center for the SDARNG resides at the state headquarters at Camp Rapid in Rapid City; an 84-acre training site first developed in 1924.

The South Dakota Air National Guard is located on the southeast corner of Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls and was federally recognized in 1946. It has more than 1,000 airmen assigned to its headquarters and the 114th Fighter Wing. The mission of the SDANG is to provide combat capability to the war fight, security for the homeland and to provide combat-ready units in three roles: federal, state and community.

The SDNG is divided into different task forces to provide assistance to our local communities throughout the state in the event of an emergency. Separated by geographical regions, units are assigned to each task force providing personnel and equipment for response to severe weather, fires, natural disasters, search-and-rescue operations, civil disturbances or homeland defense.

The proud heirs of the militia tradition can be found in the men and women of today's SDNG. They stand ready to leave the comforts of home and family to help their friends and neighbors, defend the nation's interests and bring peace and hope to people throughout the world.



## VETERANS, THE PULSE OF OUR COUNTRY!

There are a number of different visions associated with love, such as cupids and roses, but out of all the various symbols and images, none are more established than the heart.

On Valentine's Day, men and women around the world express their feelings of love with cards, chocolates, balloons, flowers, cookies, cakes, cupcakes, and other gifts; all of them decked with or designed in the form of traditional hearts.

It's not difficult to figure out the connection between the heart and Valentine's Day. The heart, after all, was thought in ancient times to be the source of all emotions. It later came to be associated only with the emotion of love.

Remember your heart beats daily with your individual pulse! The heartbeat of America is driven by veterans and their pulse for freedom. These men and women represent everything that our nation fights to protect, everything we value in life. Our honor, our liberty, our livelihood, lies with them.

The patriotism in their hearts is what allows everyday life to continue unimpeded; it is how they advance and do what they must for the good of the country. The veterans in our country show the most valued trait; selflessness, putting their country before themselves.

Over the next several years, more than a million service members will take off their uniform for the last time. These men and women have displayed extraordinary strength and resilience. They sacrificed personally for the greater good. They demonstrated remarkable perseverance in the face of adversity to protect the freedoms we enjoy daily. They showed care and compassion for those in need – many times at the risk of their own lives and they lived by the core values of duty, honor, and country; and in doing so, earned our trust, our support and our love.

Hearts in February are special on Valentine's Day, but without the continuous beat and constant vigilance that our service members and veterans have for freedom, the pulse would go quiet.

We benefitted — every one of us — from their service and sacrifice. Let's be there for them the same way they were there for us.

Caring for veterans is the very heart of President Lincoln's charge to every American in his second inaugural address near the end of our bloody Civil War. In 1865, President Lincoln directed us to care for those "who shall have borne the battle," and for their families and their survivors.

Our team, at the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, stands ready to answer President Lincoln's charge. We have great resources to assist our veterans in obtaining their benefits. We encourage veterans to reach out to our staff, our county and tribal veterans service officers and our veterans service organizations. All of these partners are a free resource to help veterans and their families. They are there to educate them on benefits, assist in the application process and will lead the charge when an appeal is needed.

Remember your sweetheart this month, but listen for the pulse of your veterans who have fought with all their heart for our country.

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# Upcoming Events

## 2017

Feb. 4—Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion—3:00 pm (CT)  
Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma  
Feb. 23—"I Spy Patriotism" Photography Exhibition—USD Muenster Center—Ballroom C—Vermillion—9:00 am—1:00 pm (CT)  
Mar. 1—SFVAHCS Creative Arts Festival—Sioux Falls VA Medical Center 2:00 pm (CT)  
Mar. 29—"Clay County's Fallen" Research Contest—USD School of Education—Room 118—Vermillion—5:00-8:00 pm (CT)  
April 19—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
Apr 28-30—DAV Annual Convention—AmericInn—Fort Pierre  
Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown  
Jun 22-25—State VFW Convention—Pierre  
Aug. 14-17—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre—Ramkota



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